

49ERS REPORT

Lee On The Loose

Woodall's fumble return powers Niners to victory

Poster Shot

Bryant Young

... Page 11

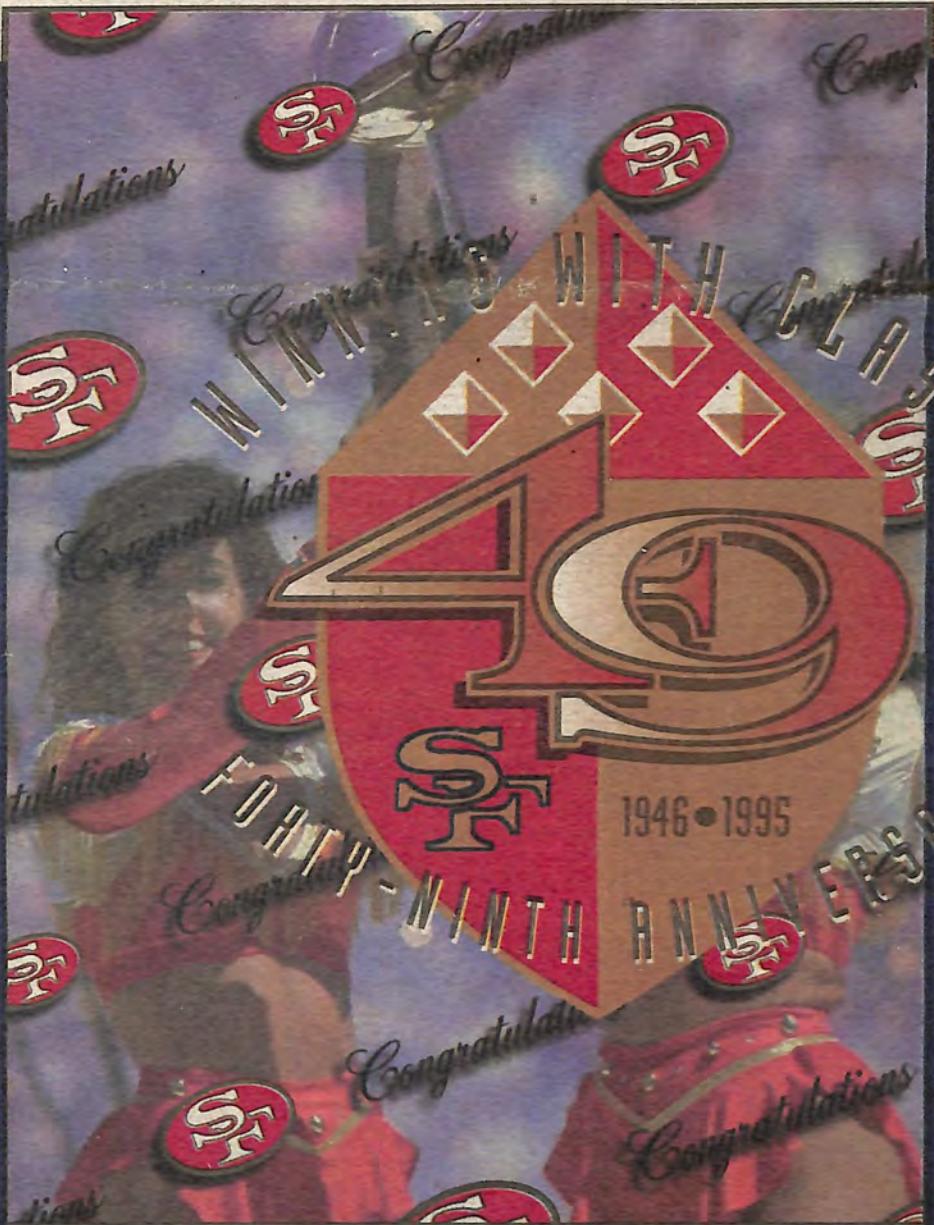
Their Month

The 49ers had a 44-9 record in December from 1981-94. They were 21-4 under George Seifert going into this season.

Initials Only

WR J.J. Stokes is the eighth 49ers player to go by his first and middle initials. The others are J.R. Boone, J.W. Lockett, R.C. Owens, C.R. Roberts, O.J. Simpson, J.D. Smith and Y.A. Tittle.

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Niners shift into high gear

... Page 6

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49ERS REPORT

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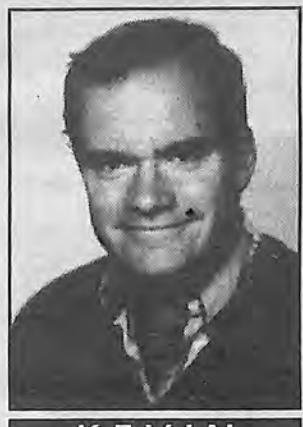
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FROM THE EDITOR

AFC IS NOT THERE YET

KEVIN
LYNCH

It happens every year. In the beginning of the season, the AFC knocks off a contending NFC team, puffs out its chest and bellows, "THIS IS OUR YEAR!"

But by season's end the AFC fades like unwatered daffodils. They prove the

name's an acronym for After the Fact Conference. The last assertion of AFC dominance was 11 years ago, when Raiders running back Marcus Allen reversed his field and weaved through a befuddled Redskins defense en route to a 38-9 victory in Super Bowl XVIII.

THAT WAS SO LONG AGO that the only way to refer to the game is with the qualifier "then." It was the then Los Angeles Raiders winning the game, with then-Raiders star Allen winning the Super Bowl MVP. Of course, the Raiders have returned to Oakland and Allen made a daring escape from Al Davis' doghouse to join the Chiefs.

It was so long ago you didn't have to think too long about what number the Super Bowl was when looking at the game's Roman numerals. But that's what happens when a conference doesn't win a Super Bowl in XI years.

Of course, this season began with promise. AFC representatives, the Colts, nipped the Niners 18-17 in October. Teams like the Raiders and Chiefs were plowing through

their schedules with remarkable and powerful ease. But, the optimism of September and October seems to be dissolving against the reality of recent history.

LATELY, THE 49ERS and Cowboys have outstripped the rest of their opponents, especially the AFC ones. They've used AFC foes like chips in their own grand card game. The Cowboys looked over their formidable hand, and said, "I'll see your 24-point slashing of the Dolphins with a 13-point dispatching of the Raiders and raise you a 12-point vanquishing of the Chiefs."

The 49ers never flinch, spilling their 10-point victory over the Bills into the ever overflowing pot. It seems, at this time of year, the 49ers and Cowboys don't really play their opponents, they play each other in a long distance game. Currently, they're using AFC teams as whipping boys in their plans to intimidate one another.

Once again, the NFC title game will be the real championship, and the Super Bowl will be a two-week tribute to the anti-climactic.

• • •

To think back on it, the 49ers have no business occupying their current place of prominence.

Injuries alone should have wrecked this season. But talented players have risen up from the ranks of the unsung. If there's any one player who has embodied this phenomenon, it's offensive lineman Kirk Scrafford.

But we're not sure that's his real name. As best we can surmise, Scrafford is really Paul Bunyan. He hails from Big Sky Country (Billings, Mont.), and he's huge,

with biceps the circumference of drainage pipes. He's as tall as a grain silo and humble as the day is long.

Scrafford (or Bunyan) is 6-7, 285 pounds and appears to have the body fat of a wide receiver. And, as it turns out, has more football instincts than "Papa Bear" George Halas.

Back in 1990, everyone was impressed with the ease with which Harris Barton moved from one offensive line position to another. He ended the 1989 season at his traditional right tackle. But over that off-season the Niners decided to switch him to guard. Barton was later moved to center because of injuries and holdouts in training camp.

ANY OFFENSIVE LINE has its nuances and complications. But the 49ers' offensive-line scheme is particularly complex, with its myriad of blocking techniques and intricate running plays. Coaches, and reporters, marveled at how smoothly Barton was able to make the transition.

Barton, however, had the benefit of four years in the 49ers' system, before he made his world tour of the line. Scrafford, ah, Bunyan, came in and mastered four offensive line positions in one season.

He started the season at right tackle, crossed over to left guard, slid over to left tackle and is now being tried at right guard.

During that time he has pass protected with the best of them, caging the Cowboys' Charles Haley, for instance. The only question remaining is, where in the Sam Hill is that Big Blue Ox? ☐

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NINERS GO LINE DANCING AGAIN

The versatile Kirk Scrafford is being asked to play his fourth different offensive-line position this season.

AFTER OPENING the season at right tackle, then playing a few games at left tackle that were followed by three games playing left guard, Scrafford opened against the Bills at right guard.

Scrafford is being shifted to accommodate Steve Wallace, who was returning from a three-game convalescence for a damaged shoulder.

"It's a new spot for Scrafford," offensive line coach Bobb McKittrick said, "but he doesn't seem to mind."

It's the seventh offensive line change this year. Injuries to right tackle Harris Barton, guard Derrick Deese and Wallace are behind most of the changes. The Niners,

however, made a change after the loss to the Colts that was not injury motivated. Steve Young was sacked six times and sustained a bruised shoulder that kept him out of service for five weeks.

Center Bart Oates was replaced after that game, but the experiment didn't last long when injuries once again forced another shift. Oates was soon back in the lineup.

"**ALL I DO** is play where they want me to play," Oates said. "I'll go out and do the job. If I do it well enough, they'll leave me in there. I'll let Bobb and George (Seifert) make the coaching decisions. Until they ask me to start coaching, I'm not going to make those decisions."

Barring further injuries, this is the lineup the Niners will stay with for the rest of the season, and conceivably into the playoffs.

For the record, it looks like this from left to right — Wallace, Jesse Sapolu, Oates, Scrafford, Barton.

THE ODD MEN OUT are Rod Milstead and Chris Dalman, two youngsters who were rotating at right guard.

"It's part of the game," Milstead said. "I don't make the decisions. I will be ready if they need me. That's all I can do."

The Niners struggled through injury problems last season, but didn't have the talented backups they have now. The problem this season is finding spots for the players they have.

"First off, I must say Milstead's done a marvelous job," Seifert said. "But, at the same time, Kirk's one of the better linemen we have. We want him on the field. And the combination of Jesse and Bart has been positive."



Kirk Scrafford

RICE CAN SEE THE END

Wide receiver Jerry Rice isn't setting any timetable for retirement. But he talks like a man who knows he won't play football forever.

"The most important thing is to pass the tradition now," Rice said last week. "Football has been great to me. I've spent so many years here. I am not saying I'm going to retire now, but I know it's coming to an end."

RICE IS IN HIS 11TH SEASON. He owns most of the significant records for receiving and is the league's all-time leading touchdown scorer. Even though the Eagles recently signed Art Monk, Rice is closing in on Monk's career reception record.

"You have guys like J.J. Stokes coming in, you know, he's 23," Rice said. "I know when I first came in (the NFL), I thought I'd play this game forever. Time flew by. Now, as a veteran, you want to pass it down and watch these guys grow."

Running back Dexter Carter said he wouldn't be surprised if Rice came to work one day and quit.

"WE'RE IN A MEETING, going over defenses, and he's going to stand up and say, 'Ah (forget) it. I'm done. I'll see you guys later.' And then he will just walk out into the sunset."

But with records still to break, the team winning and Rice being the among league leaders in receptions and yards receiving, don't bet on that happening this year. There's also another consideration. Rice is making nearly \$3 million a year.

FLORES SIGNED

Defensive end Mike Flores was signed to fill the roster spot opened when quarterback Gino Torretta was released two weeks ago.

Flores played five seasons with the Eagles after he was drafted in the 11th round in 1991. In 50 games, Flores had three sacks. He was in the Bengals' training camp this summer, but was released before the start of the regular season.

McDONALD IS PLAYER OF THE WEEK

For the fourth time this season the NFC Defensive player of the Week award went to a member of the 49ers.

Strong safety Tim McDonald had five tackles, a forced fumble and an interception return of 35 yards in the Niners' 41-13 trouncing of the Rams on Nov. 26.

Free safety Merton Hanks has been Defensive Player of the Week twice and linebacker Ken Norton won it once. In the previous week, kicker Jeff Wilkins won the Special Teams Player of the Week and quarterback Elvis Grbac was the Offensive Player of the Week.



Tim McDonald

WORTH NOTING

NINERS COOKBOOK OUT: A cookbook with all the 49ers' favorite recipes is now available. Nearly all current players and coaches have a favorite meal listed in the book, including George Seifert's salmon quiche. Proceeds benefit the Cancer Society and the 49ers Foundation. The book isn't available in stores. Persons interested in purchasing a copy of the book can check the advertisement on page 2 for details.

A FIT OF FIRSTS: Before last Sunday's game against the Bills the 49ers were ranked first in overall defense, first in run defense and first in passing offense. They were ranked second in overall offense.

INJURY NEWS: FB Adam Walker is gaining flexibility in his broken left hand and might be able to use a soft cast this week. WR Nate Singleton who broke his collarbone against the Giants on Oct. 1, might be ready for the final regular-season game. G Derrick Deese is starting to jog on his surgically repaired ankle. FB William Floyd is scheduled to have more surgery on his dislocated right knee next week.

PRACTICE SQUAD

No.	Name	Pos.
45	Michael Williams	DB
52	Antonio Armstrong	LB
93	Ryan Kuehl	DT
95	Herb Coleman	DE
	Derrick Branch	WR

INJURED RESERVE

29	Anthony Lynn	RB
40	William Floyd	FB
41	Toi Cook	CB
81	Mike Caldwell	WR



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Q. DO YOU FEEL BETTER ABOUT YOUR CLUB AND ITS CONFIDENCE?

A. Sure. I said this last week and I don't think it (our situation) has changed. I feel as though our backs are still against the wall as far as what we want to accomplish here in the regular season.

Q. HOW WOULD RATE THE TEAM ON THIS UPSWING?

A. In the last couple of games, starting with the victory over the Cowboys, it's been a good past three weeks. But to rate it drastically ahead of some of the things that have happened over the past few years, I can't do that. There have been exciting victories. We've had some very big plays, some exciting plays, and that's all good. But I'm not really looking at it from that (upswing) standpoint.

Q. IS THE PASS RUSH BETTER THAN IT WAS LAST YEAR?

A. I don't know if it's dramatically better. I think we're getting some pretty good pressure at times, and with that comes some of the big plays we've come up with, such as interceptions.

Q. IS THE CURRENT STYLE OF DEFENSE

MORE AGGRESSIVE THAN YOU'RE COMFORTABLE WITH?

A. Not at all. In fact, it's probably more consistent with the way that I called defenses when I was coaching defense myself.

Q. IS (DEFENSIVE TACKLE) BRYANT YOUNG ALL THE WAY BACK (FROM INJURY)?

A. I don't know that he's all the way back, but I know that he played so well in the game against the Dolphins (Nov. 20) that he drew particular attention from the Rams (Nov. 26). They turned their blocking towards him, which allowed Dana Stubblefield to have an exceptionally good game. Though he didn't get the sacks, the pressure he put on the quarterback was exceptionally good.

Q. HOW IMPORTANT WAS J.J. STOKES' RECENT PERFORMANCE AS FAR AS HIS FUTURE ROLE IS CONCERNED?

A. It was important. I think he's coming along quite well. As far as timing, I think people just develop that much more confidence when he makes plays like he did. He doesn't look like the type of player who would run the ball as effectively as he does, but he's very quick and he's got good stop-start movement. It's all positive. It's another weapon.

Q. WHAT ABOUT OTHER PLAYERS QUESTIONING HIS PRACTICE HABITS?

A. I think, in house, that's fine. As I've said before, the really good teams are the teams that tend to take over themselves. They take over the team from the coaches and

establish standards that maybe are higher than the coaches' standards. The great teams the 49ers have had in the past have done that. But I think they should do that within the locker room and within our meeting rooms. I don't think it's something that necessarily should be public.

Q. IS EVERY DEFENSE AGGRESSIVE?

A. There are some defenses' that play (conservatively). For whatever reason, and I've had them and I've coached them, and you don't coach them to do this, but they play more conservatively. They play not to get beaten. And then there are defenses or secondaries that play to make plays, or play more offensively.

Q. HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR ALL THE INTERCEPTIONS?

A. I think it starts with pressure. Though we're not getting a lot of sacks, we're getting good pressure. There's a lot of changing up on defenses and there's just an aggressive attitude as far as the secondary and the linebackers are concerned.

Q. DO YOU THINK FOOTBALL IS STILL PLAYED WITH SPORTSMANSHIP?

A. For the most it is. We all have our moments. When you have so many personalities and the pressure throughout a long, hard season, there are going to be moments when things appear very unsportsmanlike. But for the most part, when you have a game like this with as many people and with the pressure and money involved and everything, I think it's miraculous that it's handled as well as it is. 

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QUICK RECOVERY

Bryant Young, Rickey Jackson, Ken Norton Jr.

BY KEVIN LYNCH

We at the 49ers Report can only laugh at ourselves. Just before the 49ers started their two-game losing streak, we had written a rosy mid-season review.

Why not? The Niners had just slaughtered the Rams, 44-10, after a demoralizing loss to the Colts that had cost place-kicker Doug Brien his job. But we write our features early in the week, before we know the outcome of that weekend's game.

What had looked rosy on Tuesday turned disastrous on Sunday, when the 49ers lost to the 1-5 Saints. A week later, after they'd suffered the indignity of losing to the expansion Panthers, we decided to write a "What's Happening to the 49ers" feature.

We analyzed why the club was in a nosedive. Injuries and exhaustion were two of the theories postulated. After all the analysis the 49ers flattened the Cowboys, Dolphins and Rams in back-to-back-to-back games, of course.

So, in the name of journalistic balance, our publisher, Ray Yannucci, suggested we write a piece on how the Niners have righted the ship. We do this not knowing the outcome of last weekend's game with the Bills, of course. But we're taking the chance on the team truly being on its usual late-season roll and a loss to the Bills isn't very likely.

ALL THIS MEANS we've been doing more backpedaling than Eric Davis this season, but this time we hope to read the elusive pulse of the team. And yes, we are reversing our field quicker than Marcus Allen. But, hey, it's been a strange season.

So how have the 49ers straightened out matters? How did they rise out of the ashes despite debilitating injuries and demoralizing defeats? Three things—an unbelievably solid defense that hasn't been this good since 1987, brilliant play-calling by a couple of first-year coordina-

tors, and history.

Let's deal with the defense first.

DEFENSE

With a secondary inspired by the departure of Deion Sanders, a defensive line that is just plain talented and a cohesive set of linebackers, it's no wonder the 49ers dominate the defensive statistics.

If the defense can maintain this pace, it will certainly be the best in 49ers history by a long shot. Following the Niners' 41-13 drubbing of the Rams in Game 11 they were leading the league in fewest points allowed (173), fewest yards allowed (3,301) and interceptions. To cut it even finer, the defense has only yielded eight touchdowns in the 31 times opponents had reached the red zone, by far the league best. They were also tops in run defense and average yards allowed per play.

Even when the 49ers lost to the Saints and Panthers, it couldn't be blamed on the defense. It gave up 13 points to the Panthers, and 11 to the Saints.

"The defense has come together quite well to this point," Coach George Seifert said. "The fact our two linebackers, Ken Norton and Gary Plummer, have a better feel and understanding of the system, their play is that much better than a year ago."

BACK-TO-BACK UPSETS DIDN'T KNOCK OUT THE NINERS

Norton

and Plummer ranked first and second on the team in tackles through Nov. 26. They also seem to be making more tackles behind or at the line of scrimmage.

THE RETURN of defensive tackle Bryant Young has also made a difference. Young was awesome in the Dolphins game, sacking quarterback Dan Marino twice in the first two plays. The Rams were so concerned about Young they loaded up on him, using the center and a guard to block him.

That freed Dana Stubblefield, who pressured quarterbacks Chris Miller and Mark Rypien all the day. Later in the game, the Rams tried doubling a Stubblefield with a guard and fullback. The result was not having enough players going out for passes.

You pick your poison against the Niners. Rivals have to choose which defensive tackle to double-team. And if they double them both, they take away a player who could catch a pass, thus making it easier on the secondary.

This secondary doesn't need any help. Safety Tim McDonald is having a monster season. He was right behind Norton and Plummer with 65 tackles. He led the Niners with 13 passes defensed and intercepted three passes, two of which were returned for touchdowns. The third was run back 35 yards to the opponents' 2-yard line.

McDonald came into the season with a vengeance after his salary was cut to make cap room in the attempt to sign Sanders.

"I knew I was going to have a good year," is how he put it.

McDonald's contract was geared more toward incentives, the bulk of which he accomplished when he scored his second defensive touchdown in Game 2.

Speaking of Sanders, the secondary still feels slighted by his leaving to sign with the Cowboys. The comments from people like television analyst Howie Long still burn in their minds. Long said the defensive backfield wouldn't be nearly as good without Sanders. So far, it's been better.

THEIR SIX DEFENSIVE touchdowns tied a team record set in 1986. Like McDonald, the others in the secondary are playing with chips on the shoulders.

Right cornerback Marquez Pope was criticized when he didn't live up to high expectations early in the season. But the fact was Pope had only allowed two touchdown passes, both of which were the result of blown coverages. It seems Pope gets better in every game. The Rams threw at him four times two weeks ago. Two long passes were incomplete, and two slants to Isaac Bruce were nearly intercepted.

Davis has been overlooked his entire career. He was the one player left out of the Pro Bowl from starting secondary last season. This year, he simply can't be ignored. Sometimes it seems like Davis has either ant blood or kryptonite in his veins. For a man weighing only 178 pounds he has tremendous strength.

Rams wide receiver Todd Kinchen caught a pass and needed to stretch his 187-pound frame just 1 yard for the first down. It never happened, Davis bullied him to the

ground before Kinchen knew what hit him.

Later in the contest, during Davis' 86-yard interception run, Kinchen had a chance to return the favor. Kinchen couldn't make the tackle on Davis, who shook him off easily to get into the end zone.

Davis is also decep-

tively fast. In a race against former NFL fastest man winner Alexander Wright, he stayed with him stride for stride.

The league already knows about free safety Merton Hanks, who once again is among league leaders in interceptions. Nickel back Tyronne Drakeford has also shown flashes of brilliance. His five interceptions from a backup role is remarkable.

This talented group has benefitted from the aggressive schemes of new defensive coordinator Pete Carroll.

"The mix of the defense, playing eight-man fronts and seven-man fronts, when rush zoning and blitzing, has been put together quite well," Seifert said.

The outside pass rush has also improved, mainly because of Rickey Jackson's rebirth. He had 7 1/2 sacks through Nov. 26, which paced the team. In the beginning of the season Jackson was removed from the field on passing downs. He went to the coaches and told them to give him one game to stay in and rush the passer. Jackson then went on a five-game stretch of getting at least one sack per game.

"I could see the young guys just wasn't ready (to take over his job)," Jackson said. "At game time I could see it in their eyes, they wasn't ready."

Jackson, at 37, is still ready and producing. With a defense this good it was only a matter of time before the team started to win again.

PLAY CALLING

Some fans found the play calling of new offensive coordinator Marc Trestman wanting when the 49ers lost four games over six weeks.

Those same fans should've been just as enthusiastic in their praise of Trestman during the recent three-game winning streak. The game he called against the Cowboys is still being talked about.

His most brilliant maneuver was putting wide receiver Jerry Rice in the slot, where Deion Sanders couldn't reach him. After the game one coach said Sanders has an aversion to playing slot wide receivers. He prefers to use the sideline as a weapon in his man-to-man coverage.

When a player's in the slot, the sideline is taken away. That was why Rice was rarely guarded by Sanders against the Cow-



J.J. Stokes

boys. The Niners' use of multiple formations has fooled everyone from the Cowboys to the Dolphins to the Rams to their own players.

Ironically, before rookie wide receiver J.J. Stokes had his breakout game against the Rams, he had to put in extra time to get the formations straight. Stokes said he had struggled to get them down during the week of practice leading up to the game.

The Dolphins were caught by surprise several times. The placing of Rice in the backfield completely threw them, and they had to burn valuable time outs on defense.

The 49ers have put many players in the backfield lately, including tight end Ted Popson and guard Rod Milstead.

MYSTIQUE

Of course, excellent defense and play calling doesn't explain how the team has responded to injuries this season. Quarterback Steve Young missed five games. Fullback William Floyd is out for the rest of the season. Offensive tackles Harris Barton and Steve Wallace have missed several games. Defensive tackle Bryant Young was gone for more than a month because of a sprained ankle. Wide receiver Nate Singleton has missed most of the season with a broken collarbone. Derrick Deese hasn't been available because of an ankle injury. The list goes on.

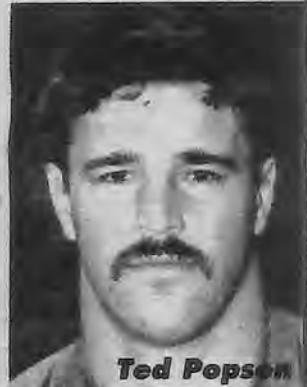
BACKUPS, LED BY quarterback Elvis Grbac, have played extremely well. But players like offensive linemen Kirk Scrafford, Rod Milstead, and Chris Dalman, defensive end Junior Bryant and fullback Adam Walker can't be overlooked.

For years, the 49ers have constantly harped on their backups. They've told them play couldn't slip when they took over. They realized that a standard had been set by the Niners' championship teams of the past, and it had to be maintained.

"I remember George telling me I needed to do a lot with my opportunity," Grbac said.

He did. Behind Grbac's humble, placid exterior is a swaggering leader with loads of confidence. Niners backups seem to all believe they are starters in a second-stringer's uniform.

Whatever the reason is for the 49ers' turnaround, there's no doubt that they're back. And, who knows, by the season's end, maybe they'll prove they're just as good as ever.



Ted Popson



Eric Davis

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COLLECTOR'S CORNER

USFL CARDS A RARE FIND



BARRY SHUCK

Clark, and they played in the Gator Bowl before the same packed stands as the new NFL team does, but this league was the United States Football League.

The Spring League, The Donald Trump League.

The Topps Co., makers of pro football picture cards, made a decision to see if history would repeat itself as it produced USFL card sets in 1984 and '85. NFL card sets were produced and sold by Topps in each of these years, as usual.

Topps made a monumental decision to manufacture American Football League cards back in '64, thereby ending its seven-year span of the prominent NFL version.

THE AFL IN 1964 was referred to as The Other League and AFL owners were called the Foolish Club. That was the common perception. There were few big-name athletes, low skill levels and couple players like Fred Biletnikoff, Jack Kemp, Buck Buchanan and John Hadl who might be able to play in the NFL. Close up the football card department, nobody watches those amateurs. Oh, sure, there were a few guys we 'had heard of' — George Blanda, Lance Alworth, Len Dawson. Oh, yeah, and a guy by the name of Joe Namath came in '65.

The AFL sets by Topps lasted four successful years, until the merger of the two leagues. So, with this in its background, their decision to produce USFL cards was a natural.

You might say, to produce cards of The Other, Other League. The 1984 set was pre-packaged, with 132 cards in its own specially made box. The card fronts have a patriotic red, white and blue theme boasting "Premier Edition." A white border crops the player photos, which show mainly sideline or warmup shots. A cool design feature is the team's helmet with logo that appears in the bottom left

corner. The card backs are hot pink, blue and white listing assorted statistics.

THIS CARD ARRAY has become one of the more important sets in modern football trading cards. It is a fairly expensive set and holds its value year after year. Currently, "Beckett Football Card Monthly" price guide lists the complete in-package set at \$400 in near-mint condition (NM).

The set includes rookie cards (RC) of Jim Kelly — \$90, Reggie White — \$70 and Herschel Walker — \$25. Oh, and a guy by the name of Steve Young at \$250. These four are cherished by fortunate collectors who own one of each. Compare the prices from this scant set with other key superstar RCs to grasp its value — 1972 Roger Staubach, \$170; '86 Jerry Rice, \$95; '70 O.J. Simpson, \$160; '84 Dan Marino, \$110; '66 Dick Butkus, \$225; '90 Emmitt Smith, \$90.

Less lucrative RCs in the set include Anthony Carter, Ricky Sanders and Bobby Hebert.

Several former or future 49ers appear in the set as well. Joe Cribbs (\$12), Harry Sydney (\$30), Derrick Crawford (\$53), Willie Harper (\$70), Bob Leopold (\$72) and Terry Beeson (\$91). Current roster members include Gary Plummer (\$88) and Young (\$52). In '85 the second and final edition was produced in much

the same fashion as the premier set. The 132-card set was sold in its own box. The card fronts followed the USFL theme using a heavy red border with blue and white stripes across the middle.

Most photos are once again mundane pregame shoots, with the team's nickname across the bottom. The backs are white with red highlights and blue lettering describing the player's previous season.

Though not the high-dollar draw as its sister issue, the 1985 set is valued at \$150 and has its own popularity and following. The highest-priced cards in the set are actually the second-year cards of Young (\$90), Kelly (\$35), and White (\$20). Key RCs involved are Clark and current CFL standout Doug Flutie at \$20 each. Niners involved are Cribbs

(\$21), Young (\$65) and Crawford (\$70). Leopold appears on a nine-card uncut sheet that was given away to members of the New Jersey Generals' youth fan club on card No. 7.

IT TOOK ABOUT 20 YEARS for another pro football league to be granted the honor of having its stars portrayed for all time on 2-by-3 pieces of cardboard. The Other, Other League might not have lasted long, but with the insight and vision at Topps, the image of the USFL will stay in our collections forever.



Barry Shuck is a sports card collector and a native of Pensacola, Fla. Write to him with comments, suggestions or questions at P.O. Box 646, Bagdad, Fla. 32350.

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Club FORTY NINER Gala

While players and coaches sweated out last-minute details of their impending battle against the Bills, other members of the 49ers community were kicking up their heels at Club Forty Niner Dinner.

The gala event at the San Francisco Hilton hotel's Grand Ballroom recognized the 49ers' 49th year of existence. Proceeds from the \$250-a-plate dinner went to the 49ers Foundation.

Highlights of the evening included a 40-minute set by singer Tony Bennett, the big band music of Rich Martini & the Forty Niner Club Band and speeches by club owner Eddie DeBartolo, club president Carmen Policy, former 49ers defensive back Ronnie Lott and former coach Bill Walsh.

Master of ceremonies and San Francisco comedian Bob Sarlotti kept things lively with his humor. Pro Football Hall of Fame member Dan Fouts introduced players from the original 1946 Niners of the All-America Football Conference.

There were plenty of 49ers luminaries in attendance, including Hall of Famers Leo Nomellini, Joe Perry and Bob St. Clair. Several in the crowd adhered to the black-tie option and had played along with the 1940s setting.

Policy probably had the best time. He bet good friend DeBartolo that he would get the crowd to give him a standing ovation. Policy then proceeded to say if the 700-800 guests would rather hear Bennett sing than him, they should stand and applaud. After guests found their seats, Policy informed the gathering that he had just won \$15,000 from DeBartolo.

Lott introduced Walsh. The father of the 49ers' offense then drew several parallels between the San Francisco community and the team itself. He said both could be boisterous, yet sophisticated.

Lott couldn't decide whether Walsh was a genius or an architect. Policy drew parallels between DeBartolo himself and the team he owns. They're both the same, age for example.

The evening was also punctuated by the Man of the Year award given to quarterback Steve Young who, of course, was down Highway 101 at the team hotel with the rest of the players and couldn't attend.

Even Bennett took time out between songs to say that if the society as a whole could adopt the same attitude engendered by the 49ers, the world would have few problems.

The event was another stop of the team's two-year celebration of its 49th and 50th anniversary. The main beneficiary of the events will be the foundation, which funnels proceeds into the community.

—Kevin Lynch



Photos by Jeff Bayer



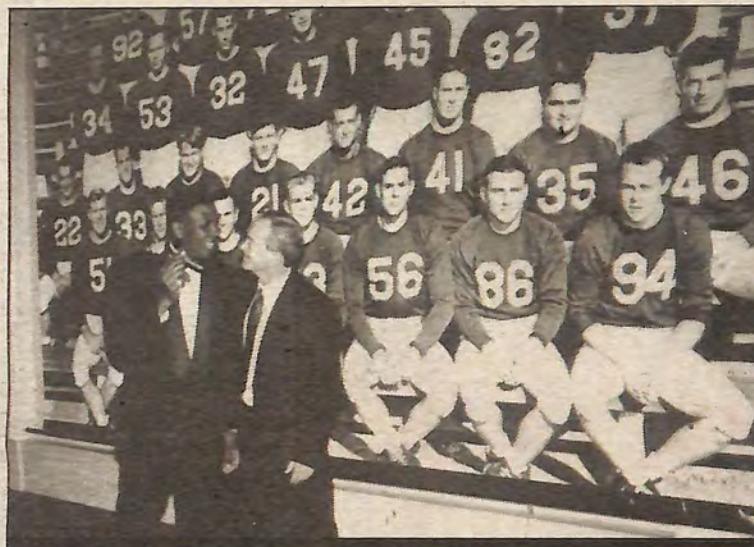
Carmen Policy, Tony Bennett, and Eddie DeBartolo Jr.



Laurie & Andy Albrecht



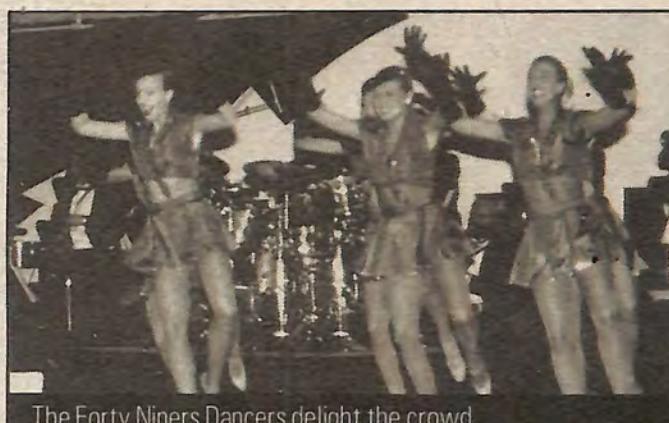
Mr & Mrs. Joe Starkey



Keena Turner pauses in front of a photo of the 1946 49ers.



Tony Bennett



The Forty Niners Dancers delight the crowd.



Former Niners Roger Craig (2nd from left) and Tom Rathman (right)



Amy Wender (R) & friend

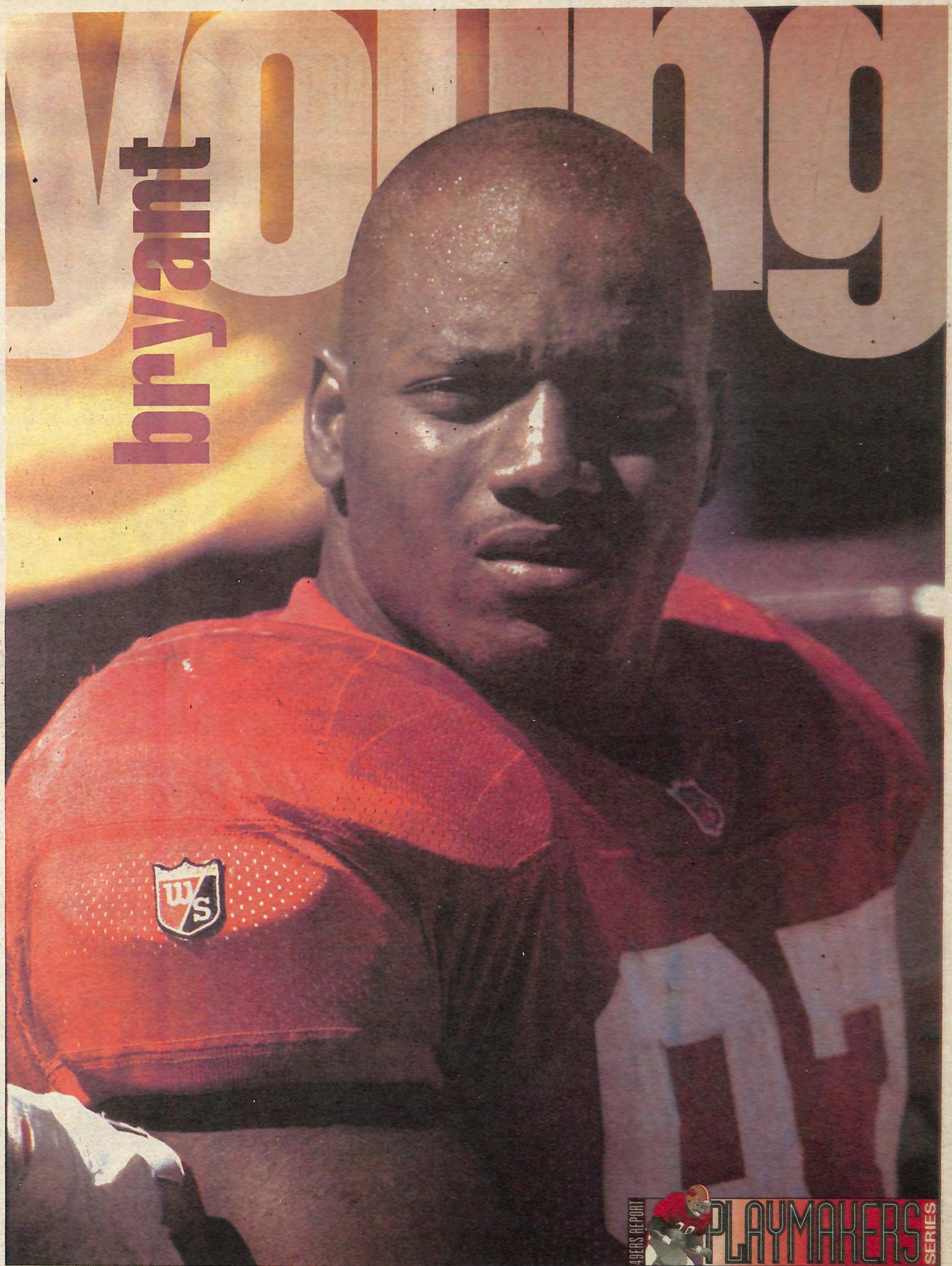


Ronnie Lott



Bill & Geri Walsh with Tony Bennett and friend

bryant



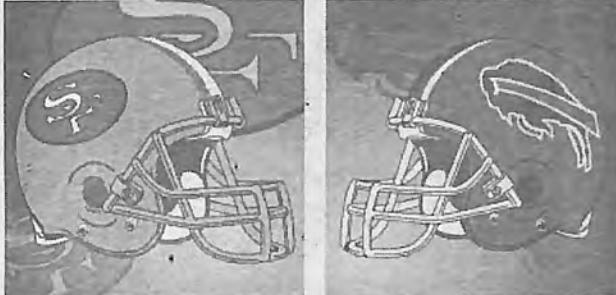
49ERS REPORT

PLAYMAKERS
SERIES

WOODALL TURNS THE TIDE

Niners Move To Within A Game Of NFC-Leading Cowboys

49ERS at BILLS



	1	2	3	4	F
49ERS	7	3	7	10	27
BILLS	3	7	0	7	17

49ERS

Win fourth in a row to go to 9-4

BILLS

Drop to 8-5

STEVE YOUNG

28-of-44 passing, 243 yards, 1 interception

JIM KELLY

18-of-41 passing, 214 yards, 3 interceptions

DEREK LOVILLE

88 yards on 24 carries

LOVILLE

10 receptions for 86 yards

JERRY RICE

5 receptions for 32 yards

49ERS

5-1 advantage in turnovers

BRUCE SMITH

3 sacks for 16 yards

TIM HARRIS

2 sacks for 15 yards

By Kevin Lynch

Every once in a while a game will turn on one play. That was the case in the 49ers' 27-17 victory over the Bills on Sunday night.

THE BILLS had a first-and-goal at the 49ers' 1-yard line and the score tied 10-10 in the third quarter. Darick Holmes was sent thundering up the middle with the ball. He vaulted and was met in mid-air by linebacker Gary Plummer.

It sounded like a train wreck. Plummer hit Holmes so hard fellow linebacker Ken Norton said HE could feel it, as if the force from the blow started a minor earthquake. Holmes coughed up the ball, which was recovered by linebacker Lee Woodall, who was in the end zone 96 yards later.

What was supposed to have been a 17-10 Bills lead instantaneously turned into a 17-10 Niners' advantage. The Bills never recovered.

For the 49ers, the win was huge. With the Falcons' 21-20 loss to the Dolphins, the 49ers took a large step towards securing their eighth division title in the last nine seasons. They now lead the division by two games with three games to play. And with the Redskins upset of the Cowboys, the 49ers are suddenly within a game of securing homefield advantage through the playoffs.

THE COWBOYS are now 10-3, and the 49ers and Packers are 9-4. The 49ers would get homefield advantage over the Packers in case of a tie because, so far, they have a better conference record. In other words, things are looking rosy for these Niners.

But things didn't look so good for the 49ers through the first 40 minutes. They started the game all right, going 73 yards in nine plays to set up fullback Adam Walker for a 1-yard plunge and his first rushing touchdown of the year.

The 49ers used running back Derek Loville almost exclusively on the drive. He caught or ran on the first five plays en route to 88 yards rushing and 86 yards receiving.

The 49ers were on the Bills' 29-yard line after Loville's



Derek Loville had 88 yards rushing and 86 receiving

five plays. Four plays later, Walker was wedging into the end zone and thoughts of a blowout were in the air.

The Bills dispelled those notions quickly. They used their twin pass-rushing terrors, Bryce Paup and Bruce Smith, to make life miserable for Steve Young. To complicate matters, left offensive tackle Steve Wallace found he couldn't use his damaged right shoulder.

"It was really frustrating," Wallace said. "Everyone asked me all week about the pain. But when I got in there I didn't have any strength."

THE BILLS TOOK full advantage, with Paup and Smith charging towards Wallace's inside shoulder. Wallace was lifted from the game and Kirk Scrafford was returned to left tackle from his starting spot at right guard in the first quarter.

Scrafford had been studying Bills linebackers and defensive tackles all week, and was unprepared for the

W27-17

hard charges of Paup and Smith. Paup, the leading sacker in the league, quickly burned Scrafford for a sack, Paup's 16th of the season.

Smith sacked Young three times and knocked him down several other times. One of them was against Scrafford.

"He set me up early with a couple of bull-rushes" Scrafford said. "He caught me sticking my head in there, then he got me with a couple of spin moves inside."

The pressure on Young led to his worst day of the season—28-of-43 passing for 243 yards, one interception and, for the first time since Oct. 2 of last year, no touchdown passes.

In fact, the multiple hits on Young and the wacky nature of the game began to remind one of the back-to-back losses to the Saints and Panthers at midseason.

The oddest combination of plays occurred in the second quarter with the 49ers holding a 7-3 advantage. Young was apparently trying to set up a screen, and threw the ball as he was backpedaling directly into the hands of Paup.

The Bills had the ball on the Niners' 25, and with their terrible scoring record inside the red zone and the 49ers' terrific red-zone defense, the Niners seemed as if they'd be happy holding the Bills to a field goal.

THEN, A PLAY LATER, quarterback Jim Kelly fired a pass to the end zone. It slipped through tight end Lonnie Johnson's hands and deflected into the arms of wide receiver Justin Armour. The rookie end from Stanford made an outstanding catch and the 49ers were suddenly trailing 10-7.

They managed a last-ditch drive just before halftime. They achieved a third-and-goal at the Bills 2 with just two seconds left. Instead of throwing quickly to the end zone, Seifert elected to go for the 20-yard field goal. It was converted by Jeff Wilkins, and the 49ers went to the locker room with a 10-10 tie.

The Bills came out in their Q formation, three wide receivers and one back, to begin the second half. They also went with their traditional no-huddle. The 49ers countered with their base defense, figuring the Bills wouldn't risk passing with the sore-shouldered Kelly.

"Everyone thinks, because they (use) the no-huddle, (the Bills) don't run," cornerback Eric Davis said. "They like to run. That's why they've had so many 1,000-yard rushers over the years."

Glaring at the 49ers' base defense, Kelly threw and the Bills moved the ball. They moved all the way down to the 1 in the third quarter and were on the verge of scoring, when Plummer made his infamous hit.

Plummer said that in 25 years of playing at the Pop Warner, college and professional levels, he never had a bigger hit.

"It was the hit of the year," fellow linebacker Ken Norton said.

"I heard it. I saw it. It was amazing," Woodall said. "It was a really nasty hit."

"I'm just glad it wasn't me," said Loville. "The tendency is to put your hand on your face when you get hit in the mouth like that, or your hands go to your sides. He (Holmes) might have blacked out for a second."

WHATEVER HAPPENED, the ball came loose and was picked up by Woodall.

"If it wasn't for Lee picking it up, we wouldn't have scored," Plummer said. "I wouldn't have made it to the 10-yard line."

Woodall evaded Kelly and dashed 96 yards for a score. Merton Hanks shoved away running back Tim Tindale, who might have had a shot at Woodall.

Feeding off the frenzy of the play, the 49ers tacked on a field goal, and an 8-yard run in the fourth quarter by Loville to salt away the victory.

But it wasn't momentum alone that turned the game. The 49ers made solid adjustments at halftime, particularly on defense. In the first half Kelly had too much time to throw. In the second half the 49ers cut loose

with blitzes and blitz zones.

The Niners, to mix it up, would sometimes rush three players and drop eight into coverage. The hounding caused turnovers, something the 49ers have come to expect. Woodall stripped Kelly later in the game and then recovered the fumble. Marquez Pope intercepted his first pass of season.

ERIC DAVIS had two interceptions, which gives him five for the season. In all, the 49ers induced five turnovers. This for the team that was leading the league in turnover ratio coming into the game.

"Our defense did a great job," Loville said. "They have been doing a great job all year keeping us in ball games."

Loville did a great job, too, reaching career highs in rushing (88 yards) and receiving (86 yards) and leading the league in both categories.

"We knew coming in they had a great pass rush," Loville said. "We knew we had to run to take some pressure off Steve (Young)."

With the running game in gear, and the offensive line getting used to the Bills, Young was only sacked once in the second half.

WORTH NOTING

TURNOVER SPECIAL: The defense set a record on LB Lee Woodall's 96-yard fumble return for a touchdown. No, it wasn't the longest fumble return in team annals, but it was a record seventh defensive TD this season. The previous record was held by the 1986 club that had five touchdowns on interception returns and one fumble return. This year, the 49ers have five interception returns and two fumble returns. CB Don Griffin held the Niners' longest fumble return record with a 99-yarder against the Bears on Dec. 23 of 1991.

INTERCEPTION MAD: The 49ers now have 25 interceptions. CB Marquez Pope had his first interception of the season in the second quarter. Eric Davis whodidn't have any pickoffs until two weeks ago against the Rams, had two in the second half. As of two weeks ago, the starting cornerbacks didn't have any pickoffs. Now they have four.

NORTON IN TRIPLE-FIGURES: LB Ken Norton has 103 tackles this season. The team record for tackles is 135 by LB Dan Bunz in 1978. This is the fourth season in a row Norton has had more than 100 tackles.

TAYLOR INJURED: WR John Taylor was inactive because of a hip pointer suffered against the Rams on Nov. 26. Taylor incurred the injury when he tried to vault a defender. J.J. Stokes got the start in his place. Dexter Carter took Taylor's spot as the punt returner.

ALUMNI DAY: Former 49ers were introduced at halftime according to the decade in which they played. Some of the original 1946 Niners attended, along with recent retirees like LB Michael Walter, FB Tom Rathman and RB Roger Craig.

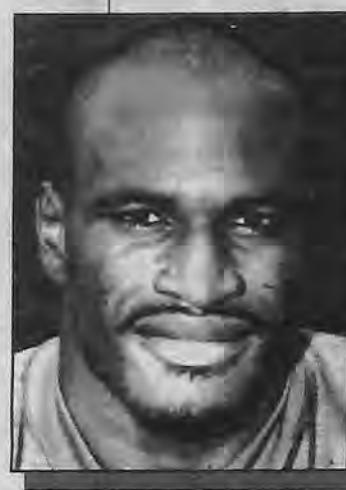
QUITE AN HONOR: QB Steve Young was named Man of the Year by True Value hardware stores for his contributions on and off the field. His Forever Young Foundation was presented with a \$5,000 check.

KELLY VS. YOUNG: When Steve Young and Jim Kelly were playing in the USFL, Kelly had a professional football record of 574 yards passing against Young's Los Angeles Express. Young countered with 13-of-29 passing for 255 yards against Kelly's Houston Gamblers.

INACTIVES: WR John Taylor, WR Nate Singleton, G Derrick Deese, G Tim Hanshaw, DE Oliver Barnett and FB Brian O'Neal weren't in uniform on Sunday.

FOR STARTERS: The 49ers started the game with a touchdown drive for the third time this season. They did the same thing against the Cowboys in Week 10 and against the Falcons in Week 2.

49ERS REPORT PRESENTS



PLAYER OF THE GAME

Lee Woodall

A 96-yard fumble recovery is reason enough to be named Player of the Game. But linebacker Lee Woodall added a team-leading nine tackles, a sack, a forced fumble and a second fumble recovery. For all that Woodall was named 49ers Report Player of the Game.

HOW THEY SCORED

FIRST QUARTER

49ERS — Adam Walker 1-yard run (Jeff Wilkins kick). Drive: 9 plays, 73 yards. Time of possession: 5:15. Time remaining: 9:45. Key plays: Derek Loville 31 pass from Steve Young; Brent Jones 25 pass from Young to Bills' 3. 49ERS 7-0

BILLS — Steve Christie 23-yard field goal. Drive: 16 plays, 75 yards. Time of possession: 7:29. Time remaining: 2:28. Key play: Thurman Thomas 21 run. 49ERS 7-3

SECOND QUARTER

BILLS — Justin Armour 28-yard pass from Jim Kelly (Christie kick). Drive: 2 plays, 28 yards. Time of possession: 3:35. Time remaining: 1:53. Key play: Bryce Paup 2 interception return. BILLS 10-7

49ERS — Wilkins 20-yard field goal. Drive: 10 plays, 62 yards. Time of possession: 1:51. Time remaining: 0:2. Key play: Jones 16 pass from Young. TIED 10-10

THIRD QUARTER

49ERS — Lee Woodall 96-yard fumble return (Wilkins kick). Time remaining: 9:09. 49ERS 17-10

49ERS — Wilkins 40-yard field goal. Drive: 7 plays, 17 yards. Time of possession: 2:49. Time remaining: 14:11. Key play: Loville 6 pass from Young. 49ERS 20-10

FOURTH QUARTER

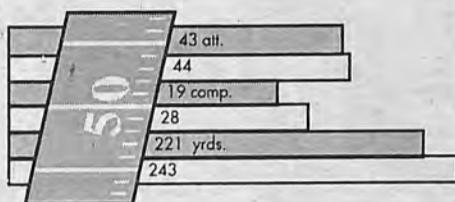
BILLS — Steve Tasker 13-yard pass from Kelly (Christie kick). Drive: 8 plays, 77 yards. Time of possession: 3:19. Time remaining: 10:52. Key play: Lonnie Johnson 52 pass from Kelly. 49ERS 20-17

49ERS — Loville 8-yard run (Wilkins kick). Drive: 6 plays, 60 yards. Time of possession: 2:59. Time remaining: 7:57. Key plays: J.J. Stokes 17 pass from Young; Stokes 22 pass from Young. 49ERS 27-17

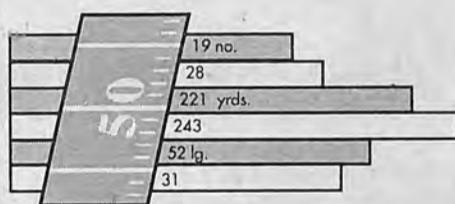
BY THE NUMBERS

GAME STATS

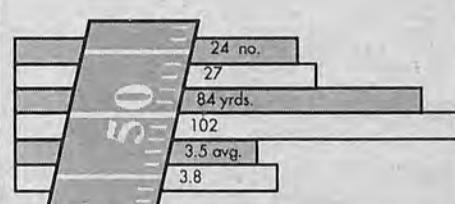
PASSING						
	Att	Comp	Yds	Sks	Yds/Yds	TD
Bills						
Kelly	41	18	214	3/27	2	52
Collins	1	1	7	1/3	0	7
Armour	1	0	0	0/0	0	0
Total	43	19	221	4/30	2	52
49ers						
Young	44	28	243	4/22	0	31
Total	44	28	243	4/22	0	31



RECEIVING				
	No	Yds	Lg	TD
Bills				
Brooks	5	39	12	0
Tasker	4	47	18	1
Johnson	3	60	52	0
Holmes	2	22	15	0
Thomas	2	11	6	0
Armour	1	28	28	1
Cline	1	7	7	0
Copeland	1	7	7	0
Total	19	221	52	2
49ers				
Loville	10	86	31	0
Jones	5	57	23	0
Rice	5	32	12	0
Stokes	4	44	22	0
Walker	2	13	9	0
Thomas	1	7	7	0
Popson	1	4	4	0
Totals	28	243	31	0



RUSHING					
	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Bills					
Holmes	11	41	3.7	15	0
Thomas	10	40	4.0	22	0
Armour	1	2	2.0	2	0
Kelly	2	1	0.5	2	0
Total	24	84	3.5	22	0
49ers					
Loville	24	88	3.7	15	1
Young	2	13	6.5	11	0
Walker	1	1	1.0	1	1
Total	27	102	3.8	15	2



INTERCEPTIONS				
	No	Yds	Lg	TD
Bills				
Paup	1	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0	0
49ers				
Davis	2	-2	0	0
Pope	1	-7	-7	0
Total	3	-9	0	0

KICKOFF RETURNS				
	No	Yds	Lg	TD
Bills				
Holmes	4	72	23	0
Total	4	72	23	0
49ers				
Carter	3	79	28	0
Willis	1	22	22	0
Total	4	101	28	0

PUNTING					
	No	Yds	Avg	TB	In20
Bills					
Mohr	6	224	37.3	1	1
Total	6	224	37.3	1	1
49ers					
Thompson	7	292	41.7	1	0
Total	7	292	41.7	1	0

PUNT RETURNS					
	No	FC	Yds	Lg	TD
Bills					
Tasker	4	2	70	44	0
Total	4	2	70	44	0
49ers					
Carter	0	2	0	0	0
Total	0	2	0	0	0

TEAM STATISTICS				
	Bills	49ers		
Total First Downs	15	18		
By Rushing	6	5		
By Passing	0	1		
By Penalty	7-16-44%	5-16-31%		
Third Down Efficiency	0-0-0%	1-2-50%		
Total Net Yards	275	232		
Total Offensive Plays	71	75		
Avg. Gain Per Offensive Play	3.9	4.3		
Net Yards Rushing	84	102		
Total Rushing Plays	24	27		
Avg. Gain Per Rushing Play	3.5	2.8		
Net Yards Passing	191	221		
Times Thrown/Yards Lost	4-30	4-22		
Gross Yards Passing	221	243		
Pass Att.-Comp.-Int.	43-19-3	44-28-1		
Avg. Gain Per Passing Play	4.1	4.6		
Punts/Average	6-37.3	7-41.7		
Had Blocked	0	0		
Yards on Punt Returns	70	0		
Yards on Kickoff Returns	72	101		
Yards on Interception Returns	1	-9		
Penalties/Yards	7-44	7-35		
Fumbles/Lost	3-2	0-0		
Touchdowns	2	3		
Rushing	0	2		
Passing	2	0		
Returns	0	1		
Extra points Made/Attempted	2/2	3/3		
Kicking Made/Attempts	2/2	3/3		
Passing Made/Attempts	0/0	0/0		
Rushing Made/Attempts	0/0	0/0		
Field Goals Made/Attempted	1/1	2/3		
Time of Possession	27:11	32:49		

RUSHING					
</th					

1995

NFL SCHEDULE

STANDINGS

AFC

	W	L	PF	PA
Bills	8	5	265	260
Colts	7	6	256	251
Dolphins	7	6	324	281
Patriots	5	8	229	298
Jets	3	10	199	318

Cent.

	W	L	PF	PA
Steelers	9	4	318	266
Bengals	5	8	296	314
Oilers	5	8	280	277
Browns	4	9	231	295
Jaguars	3	10	220	298

West

	W	L	PF	PA
Chiefs	11	2	306	208
Raiders	8	5	300	228
Broncos	7	6	313	266
Chargers	6	7	239	257
Seahawks	6	7	285	303

NFC

	W	L	PF	PA
Cowboys	10	3	360	238
Eagles	8	5	263	281
Cardinals	4	9	217	336
Giants	4	9	233	279
Redskins	4	9	258	299

Cent.

	W	L	PF	PA
Packers	9	4	336	259
Bears	7	5	324	293
Vikings	7	6	331	310
Lions	6	6	304	302
Buccaneers	6	7	205	257

West

	W	L	PF	PA
49ers	9	4	362	190
Falcons	7	6	298	287
Rams	7	6	237	297
Panthers	6	7	241	257
Saints	6	7	270	295

American Football Conference

BILLS

	8-5
Sept. 3	at Denver
Sept. 10	Carolina
Sept. 17	Indianapolis
Sept. 24	OPEN
Oct. 1	at Cleveland
Oct. 8	NY. Jets
Oct. 15	Seattle
Oct. 23	at New England
Oct. 29	at Miami
Nov. 5	at Indianapolis
Nov. 12	Atlanta
Nov. 19	at NY. Jets
Nov. 26	New England
Dec. 3	at San Francisco
Dec. 10	at St. Louis
Dec. 17	Miami
Dec. 24	Houston

COLTS

	7-6
Sept. 3	Cincinnati
Sept. 10	at N.Y. Jets
Sept. 17	at Buffalo
Sept. 24	OPEN
Oct. 1	St. Louis
Oct. 8	at Miami
Oct. 15	San Francisco
Oct. 22	at Oakland
Oct. 29	NY. Jets
Nov. 5	Buffalo
Nov. 12	at New Orleans
Nov. 19	at New England
Nov. 26	Miami
Dec. 3	at Carolina
Dec. 10	at Jacksonville
Dec. 17	San Diego
Dec. 24	New England

DOLPHINS

	7-6
Sept. 3	N.Y. Jets
Sept. 10	at New England
Sept. 17	Pittsburgh
Sept. 24	OPEN
Oct. 1	at Cincinnati
Oct. 8	Indianapolis
Oct. 15	at New Orleans
Oct. 22	at N.Y. Jets
Oct. 29	Buffalo
Nov. 5	at San Diego
Nov. 12	New England
Nov. 19	San Francisco
Nov. 26	at Indianapolis
Dec. 3	Atlanta
Dec. 10	Kansas City
Dec. 17	at Buffalo
Dec. 24	at St. Louis

JETS

	3-10
Sept. 3	at Miami
Sept. 10	Indianapolis
Sept. 17	Jacksonville
Sept. 24	at Atlanta
Oct. 1	Oakland
Oct. 8	at Buffalo
Oct. 15	Carolina
Oct. 22	Miami
Oct. 29	at Indianapolis
Nov. 5	New England
Nov. 12	at Buffalo
Nov. 19	Seattle
Nov. 26	at St. Louis
Dec. 3	at New England
Dec. 10	Houston
Dec. 17	New Orleans
Dec. 24	

PATRIOTS

	5-8
Sept. 3	Cleveland
Sept. 10	Miami
Sept. 17	at San Francisco
Sept. 24	OPEN
Oct. 1	at Atlanta
Oct. 8	Denver
Oct. 15	at Kansas City
Oct. 22	Buffalo
Oct. 29	Carolina
Nov. 5	at N.Y. Jets
Nov. 12	at Miami
Nov. 19	Indianapolis
Nov. 26	New Orleans
Dec. 3	at New England
Dec. 10	N.Y. Jets
Dec. 17	at Pittsburgh
Dec. 24	at Indianapolis

BENGALS

	5-8
Sept. 3	at Indianapolis
Sept. 10	Jacksonville
Sept. 17	at Seattle
Sept. 24	Houston
Oct. 1	Miami
Oct. 8	at Tampa Bay
Oct. 15	OPEN
Oct. 22	at Pittsburgh
Oct. 29	Cleveland
Nov. 5	26-29 OT
Nov. 12	at Houston
Nov. 19	Pittsburgh
Nov. 26	at Jacksonville
Dec. 3	at Green Bay
Dec. 10	Chicago
Dec. 17	at Cleveland
Dec. 24	Minnesota

BROWNS

	4-9
Sept. 3	at New England
Sept. 10	Tampa Bay
Sept. 17	at Houston
Sept. 24	Kansas City
Oct. 1	Buffalo
Oct. 8	OPEN
Oct. 15	at Cincinnati
Oct. 22	26-29 OT
Oct. 29	at Cincinnati
Nov. 5	Houston
Nov. 12	at Pittsburgh
Nov. 19	31-49
Nov. 26	at Jacksonville
Dec. 3	at San Diego
Dec. 10	Chicago
Dec. 17	at Cleveland
Dec. 24	Minnesota

JAGUARS

	3-10
Sept. 3	Houston
Sept. 10	at Cincinnati
Sept. 17	N.Y. Jets
Sept. 24	Green Bay
Oct. 1	at Houston
Oct. 8	Pittsburgh
Oct. 15	Chicago
Oct. 22	27-30
Oct. 29	at Cleveland
Nov. 5	23-30 OT

49ERS

ROSTER AND DEPTH CHART

3	Thompson, Tommy	P
6	Conklin, Cary	QB
8	Young, Steve	QB
14	Wilkin, Jeff	K
18	Grbac, Elvis	QB
20	Loville, Derek	RB
22	Drakeford, Tyronne	CB
23	Pope, Marquez	CB
24	Willis, Jamal	RB
25	Davis, Eric	CB
26	O'Neal, Brian	FB
27	Walker, Adam	RB
31	Israel, Steve	CB
32	Ervins, Ricky	RB
33	Dodge, Dedrick	S
35	Carter, Dexter	RB
36	Hanks, Merton	S
43	Hall, Darryl	CB
46	McDonald, Tim	S
50	Plummer, Gary	LB
51	Norton Jr, Ken	LB
53	Peterson, Anthony	LB
54	Woodall, Lee	LB
55	Mitchell, Kevin	LB
57	Jackson, Rickey	DE
61	Sapolu, Jesse	G
63	Deese, Derrick	G
66	Oates, Bart	CC
67	Dalman, Chris	G-C
69	Milstead, Rod	G
72	Barnett, Oliver	DE
74	Wallace, Steve	OT
75	Pollack, Frank	OT
76	Scrafford, Kirk	OT-G
77	Hanshaw, Tim	G
78	Brandon, Michael	DE
79	Barton, Harris	OT
80	Rice, Jerry	WR
82	Taylor, John	WR
83	Stokes, J.J.	WR
84	Jones, Brent	TE
85	Popson, Ted	TE
86	Carolan, Brett	TE
88	Singleton, Nate	WR
89	Thomas, Chris	WR
90	Bryant, Junior	DE
91	Williams, Alfred	DE
92	Flores, Mike	DE
94	Stubblefield, Dana	DT
96	Brown, Dennis	DE
97	Young, Bryant	DT
98	Goss, Antonio	LB
99	Harris, Tim	DE

OFFENSE

WR	82-TAYLOR	83-Stokes
LT	74-WALLACE	75-Pollack
LG	76-SCRAFFORD	77-Hanshaw
C	61-SAPOLU	66-Oates
RG	69-MILSTEAD	67-Dalman
RT	79-BARTON	75-Pollack
TE	84-JONES	85-Popson
WR	80-RICE	89-Thomas
QB	8-YOUNG	18-Grbac
HB	20-LOVILLE	32-Ervins
FB	27-WALKER	24-Willis

DEFENSE

LE	96-BROWN	99-Harris
LT	97-B. YOUNG	90-Bryant
RT	94-STUBBLEFIELD	90-Bryant
RE	57-JACKSON	91-Williams
LLB	54-WOODALL	98-Goss
MLB	50-PLUMMER	55-Mitchell
RLB	51-NORTON	53-Peterson
LCB	25-DAVIS	22-Drakeford
RCB	23-POPE	22-Drakeford
SS	46-MCDONALD	33-Dodge
FS	36-HANKS	33-Dodge

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	3-THOMPSON	3-Thompson
K	14-WILKINS	
H	18-GRBAC	
C	66-OATES	
PR	82-TAYLOR	35-Carter
KR	35-CARTER	24-Willis

PREVIEW



49ERS at PANTHERS

Forget the Cowboys, the Dolphins, even the rematch with the chatty Rams. The 49ers probably want to avenge their loss to the Panthers more than any other defeat they've suffered this season.

The Panthers aren't cocky like the Rams, arrogant like the Cowboys, nor are they one of the powers in the AFC like the Dolphins. But they made history by downing the Niners 13-7 at Candlestick Park on Nov. 11 of this year. It marked the first time a Super Bowl champion had ever been defeated by an expansion club.

IT SENT A RIPPLE through the league that the 49ers might not recover after back-to-back losses to the last-place Saints and first-year Panthers. The 49ers have risen like the Phoenix, but the Niners were far from elated.

"I think most of the players were embarrassed, losing that game to the Panthers," wide receiver John Taylor said. "It's an expansion team. Sure, they're going to win games. We just didn't want them to win games against us."

Some would argue that the Panthers aren't an expansion team in the traditional sense at all. No expansion team has ever won four games in one season. The Panthers won four games in a four-week stretch, and was 5-7 after Nov. 26.

No expansion team has ever been able to take advantage of free agency like the Panthers. They have proven veterans like Lamar Lathon, Sam Mills, Mark Carrier and Pete Metzelaars. They also have one of the toughest defenses in the league, ranking sixth overall.

The defense has accomplished milestones very unexpansionlike. For example, it limited the Jets to 138 total



RB Derek Loville runs over several fallen Panthers on Nov. 5.

yards, the fewest by a Jets team in the 1990s. During their four-game winning streak, the Panthers allowed only three touchdowns and induced 15 turnovers.

SPECIAL TEAMS is another Panthers strength. Randy Baldwin and Vernon Turner are two of the best kick returners in the league. Bubba McDowell has blocked six kicks in his career.

And, as the 49ers have discovered, the Panthers are certainly a team never to be taken lightly.

WHEN THE 49ERS HAVE THE BALL

All the 49ers have to do is keep their same game plan and hold onto the ball. They had a 404-202 total yards advantage the last time. No team, even a defending Super Bowl champion, can expect to turn over the ball three times inside the opponent's 5-yard line and win. Passing seems most effective against the Panthers. They're ranked 14th against the pass and eighth against the run through 12 games. They're one of the rare teams that plays the 3-4 defense. The 49ers like to use running plays against 3-4 schemes, because of the many double-teams they can get on defensive linemen.

The biggest problem the 49ers had against the Panthers Nov. 5 was stopping the short throws to quarterback Kerry Collins' right side. Collins continually threw passes to wide receiver Mark Carrier on short routes and the passes somehow wedged between cornerback Eric Davis and Carrier. Davis said the throws were glancing off his forearms, yet were still caught by Carrier. Expect the Niners to do something to stop it. They could blitz a cornerback from that side, or float a linebacker over to clog the passing lane. The Panthers know the success they had and might try to play off it. Collins was efficient last time, completing 17 of 30 passes for 150 yards and an interception. He'll need an even better day this time.

WHEN THE PANTHERS HAVE THE BALL

GAME 14

QUOTABLE

“I SAID IF THE TIGHT END CATCHES ME, I’LL RETIRE.”

— PANTHERS CB TIM MCKYER ON HIS 96-YARD INTERCEPTION RETURN FOR A TOUCHDOWN AGAINST THE 49ERS.

FACTS & FIGURES

DATE: Sunday, Dec. 10

SITE: Memorial Stadium, Clemson, S.C.

TIME: 10 a.m. (PST)

TELEVISION: Fox (Channel 2 in Bay Area)

SURFACE: Grass

SERIES: Panthers, 1-0

LAST MEETING: Panthers 13, 49ers 7, Nov. 5 at Candlestick Park

WORTH NOTING

DOUBLE WHAMMY: It wasn't tough to decide which agent QB Kerry Collins should choose. Collins, after finishing up a tremendous college career at Penn State, was on the telephone to his father when the line was interrupted by Niners QB Steve Young, who suggested Collins get with Young's agent, Leigh Steinberg. The line clicked again, and it was Cowboys QB Troy Aikman, another Steinberg client, who put in a plug. Within the next two weeks Collins had signed with Steinberg.

'NOT THEM!': If anyone has a reason to hate the 49ers it's Panthers RB Derrick Moore. Moore, who

had played behind Barry Sanders with the Lions, decided to take a pay cut to sign with the Niners in the off-season, but failed to make the team. He was picked up by the Panthers, became their starting running back and was on pace to beat Falcon runner Junior Coffey's 1966 record for most yards rushing on an expansion team (722). Then, with 546 yards, he sprained a knee against, you guessed it, the 49ers.

NINERS CONNECTION: The only former 49ers player on the Panthers is Mark Thomas, a backup defensive end taken with the 10th pick of the expansion draft. Thomas had two sacks through 12 games this year.

KEY PLAYERS



LB Rickey Jackson had his best day of the season with 2 1/2 sacks against Panthers backup OT Mark Dennis. But **Derrick Graham**, their first-stringer, is expected to be back for this game ... **QB Steve Young** didn't play in the first Niners-Panthers game. His mobility is something the Panthers must take into account ... The Panthers' weakened running game should make for a busy day for CBs Marquez Pope and Eric Davis ... **WR Jerry Rice** started a four-game streak of 100-yards receiving games

against the Panthers ... **TE Brent Jones**

will have a tough battle against the Panthers' experienced linebackers.



Derrick Graham

look tremendous in the last game. Poole caused WR Jerry Rice and John Taylor to fumble inside the Panthers' 5. McKyer intercepted a pass and returned 96 yards for a touchdown, which turned around the game. But the fact is McKyer's career is on the wane and Poole is just a rookie susceptible to being beaten deep ... **LB Sam Mills** knows the Niners well, having played against them for more than a decade when he was with the Saints. But it was **LB Carlton Bailey** who had a great day against the 49ers (10 tackles)

... **QB Kerry Collins** has rookie statistics. He was 151-of-299 passing, with 12 touchdowns and 15 interceptions, through 12 games

... **WR Mark Carrier** must be stopped. He had six catches for 59 yards in the first game against the Niners, and had 48 catches for 788 yards after 12 games.



Tim McKyer

PANTHERS

ROSTER AND DEPTH CHART

4	Kasay, John	K
6	Barnhardt, Tommy	P
10	Trudeau, Jack	QB
12	Collins, Kerry	QB
14	Reich, Frank	QB
20	Moore, Derrick	RB
21	Smith, Rod	CB
22	McKyer, Tim	CB
23	Johnson, Anthony	RB
25	McDowell, Bubba	S
27	Lofton, Steve	CB
30	Griffith, Howard	FB
31	Thomas, Blair	RB
33	By'not'e, Butler	CB
34	Philyaw, Dino	RB
37	Cota, Chad	S
38	Poole, Tyrone	CB
39	Maxie, Brett	SS
40	Terrell, Pat	S
44	Christian, Bob	RB
50	Fountaine, Jamal	LB
51	Mills, Sam	LB
52	Elliott, Matt	G
53	Butcher, Paul	LB
54	Bailey, Carlton	LB
55	Faryniarz, Brett	LB
56	Conner, Daron	LB
57	Lathon, Lamar	LB
58	Royal, Andre	LB
60	Peterson, Andrew	G
62	Dennis, Mark	GT
63	Rodenhauser, Mark	CC
64	Whitley, Curtis	CC
65	Garcia, Frank	C
71	Kragen, Greg	NT
74	Graham, Derrick	T
78	Brockermeyer, Blake	T
79	Love, Sean	G
80	Stone, Dwight	WR
81	Jones, Reggie	WR
82	Beebe, Don	WR
83	Carrier, Mark	WR
84	Guilford, Eric	WR
86	Green, Willie	WR
87	Campbell, Mathew	TE
88	Metzelaars, Pete	TE
89	Rasby, Walter	TE
90	Zgonina, Jeff	DL
92	Price, Shawn	DE
93	Fox, Mike	DE
95	Thomas, Mark	DE
96	King, Shawn	DE
98	Williams, Gerald	DE

OFFENSE

WR	84-GULIFORD	86-Green
LT	78-BROCKERMEYER	60-Peterson
LG	65-GARCIA	79-Love
C	64-WHITLEY	65-Garcia
RG	52-ELLIOTT	79-Love
RT	74-GRAHAM	62-Dennis
TE	88-METZELAARS	87-Campbell
WR	83-CARRIER	82-Beebe
QB	12-COLLINS	14-Reich
FB	30-GRIFFITH	44-Christian
HB	20-MOORE	31-Thomas

DEFENSE

LDE	93-FOX	92-Price
NT	71-KRAGEN	90-Zgonina
RDE	98-WILLIAMS	96-King
LOLB	57-LATHON	55-Faryniarz
LILB	51-MILLS	53-Butcher
RILB	54-BAILEY	58-Royal
ROLB	56-CONNER	55-Faryniarz
LCB	38-POOLE	27-Lofton
RCB	22-MCKYER	21-Smith
SS	39-MAXIE	25-McDowell
FS	40-TERRELL	37-Cota

SPECIAL TEAMS

PK	4-KASAY	6-Barnhardt
P	6-BARNHARDT	4-Kasay
KO	4-KASAY	6-Barnhardt
H	6-BARNHARDT	14-Reich
PR	84-GULIFORD	38-Poole
KOR	33-BY'NOT'E	80-Stone
PC	63-RODENHAUSER	64-Whitley
KC	63-RODENHAUSER	64-Whitley

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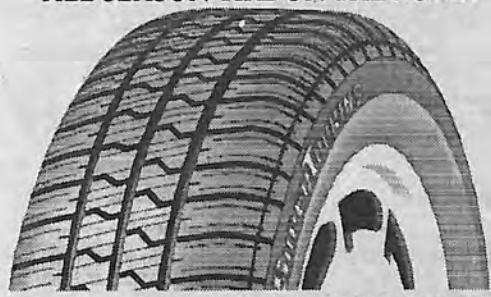
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This Week's Game

Last Week's Record
Season Record

10-5
114-80

10-5
120-74

9-6
109-85

8-7
126-68

ARIZONA at SAN DIEGO	ARIZONA	SAN DIEGO	SAN DIEGO	SAN DIEGO
CLEVELAND at MINNESOTA	MINNESOTA	MINNESOTA	MINNESOTA	MINNESOTA
BUFFALO at ST. LOUIS	ST. LOUIS	BUFFALO	ST. LOUIS	BUFFALO
CHICAGO at CINCINNATI	CINCINNATI	CHICAGO	CHICAGO	CHICAGO
DALLAS at PHILADELPHIA	PHILADELPHIA	DALLAS	DALLAS	DALLAS
DETROIT at HOUSTON	DETROIT	DETROIT	DETROIT	DETROIT
INDIANAPOLIS at JACKSONVILLE	JACKSONVILLE	JACKSONVILLE	JACKSONVILLE	INDIANAPOLIS
NEW ORLEANS at ATLANTA	ATLANTA	ATLANTA	ATLANTA	ATLANTA
NY JETS at NEW ENGLAND	NEW ENGLAND	NEW ENGLAND	NEW ENGLAND	NEW ENGLAND
PITTSBURGH at OAKLAND	OAKLAND	PITTSBURGH	OAKLAND	OAKLAND
SAN FRANCISCO at CAROLINA	SAN FRANCISCO	SAN FRANCISCO	SAN FRANCISCO	SAN FRANCISCO
SEATTLE at DENVER	DENVER	DENVER	DENVER	DENVER
WASHINGTON at NY GIANTS	WASHINGTON	WASHINGTON	WASHINGTON	NY GIANTS
GREEN BAY at TAMPA BAY	GREEN BAY	GREEN BAY	GREEN BAY	GREEN BAY
KANSAS CITY at MIAMI	KANSAS CITY	KANSAS CITY	MIAMI	MIAMI

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Last Week's Record
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122-72Jerry Lami
Sticks8-7
120-74Loring DeMartini
Van's Restaurant8-7
126-68

ARIZONA at SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO

CLEVELAND at MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA

BUFFALO at ST. LOUIS

BUFFALO

BUFFALO

BUFFALO

BUFFALO

CHICAGO at CINCINNATI

CHICAGO

CHICAGO

CHICAGO

CINCINNATI

DALLAS at PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA

DALLAS

DALLAS

DALLAS

DETROIT at HOUSTON

HOUSTON

DETROIT

DETROIT

HOUSTON

INDIANAPOLIS at JACKSONVILLE

INDIANAPOLIS

INDIANAPOLIS

INDIANAPOLIS

INDIANAPOLIS

NEW ORLEANS at ATLANTA

ATLANTA

ATLANTA

ATLANTA

ATLANTA

NY JETS at NEW ENGLAND

NEW ENGLAND

NEW ENGLAND

NEW ENGLAND

NEW ENGLAND

PITTSBURGH at OAKLAND

OAKLAND

OAKLAND

OAKLAND

OAKLAND

SAN FRANCISCO at CAROLINA

SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO

SEATTLE at DENVER

DENVER

DENVER

DENVER

DENVER

WASHINGTON at NY GIANTS

NY GIANTS

NY GIANTS

WASHINGTON

NY GIANTS

GREEN BAY at TAMPA BAY

TAMPA BAY

GREEN BAY

GREEN BAY

GREEN BAY

KANSAS CITY at MIAMI

MIAMI

KANSAS CITY

KANSAS CITY

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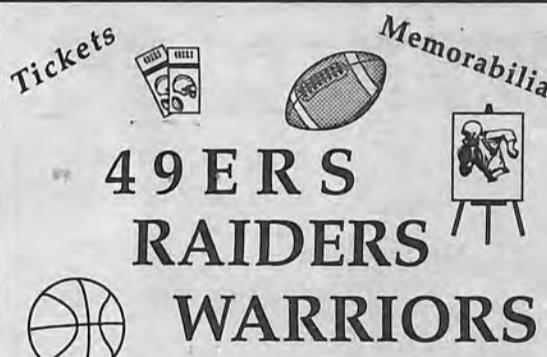
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